

in spite of her testamentary injunctions. The scandal of this consummation is only relieved by the humour with which it is depicted.

The clamant need of reformation is the constant refrain of such exposures. In the "Tragedie of the Cardinall" he makes even Beaton reappear to make a clean breast of his sins, and appeal to princes and prelates for reformation on pain of being burned with him in hell.

It is in the "Pleasant Satyre of the Three Estaites" (1540) that Lyndsay reaches high-water mark both as dramatic poet and as reformer of Church and State. This masterpiece is a drama of real life. It ushers on the stage all sorts and conditions of men under the conventional guise of the virtues and the vices, and is truly representative of the nation. It does not appear to have been printed during its author's lifetime, but it was acted on various occasions—at Linlithgow, Edinburgh, Cupar. It must be confessed that the author surpassed himself in the use of coarse language and episodes, but the obscenities which disfigure it were evidently to the taste of the age, and certainly did not weaken its practical effects. It carried conviction straight to the heart of the multitude. So pungent and gross is it that it is difficult to believe that it was played (as was actually the case) before the king and queen at Linlithgow in 1540. The poet strips, as it were, all classes of society to the skin, and remorselessly shows them their own deformities. King Humanitas is only a thin disguise for James himself, and the devotion of his majesty to Dame Sensuality, whom Wantonness leads to his chamber, is a terribly straight hit at the king's illicit amours. His most mordant thrusts are, however, reserved for the clergy, high and low. Flattery, Falsity, Deceit, for instance, who follow Sensuality and Wantonness on the stage in quest of preferment at court, appear as clerics newly arrived from France, and give themselves out as Devotion, Sapience, and Discretion. They hound Good Counsel out of the precincts of the court; they accuse Verity, who enters anon to warn kings and prelates of their duty to the people, of heresy, and send her to the stocks. The same fate overtakes Chastity, who vainly seeks a lodging with the prelates and the nuns :—

" They wald nocht let me bide [stay]  
sa lang To say my pater noster."